who might prefer a poem, novel, or even text to a 'document/artefact' will become aware that a certain forensic dryness recurs throughout this book, bringing both its accurate rewards and its intermittent aridities. Again, readers might be warned that 'us, the literary culture' means almost exclusively 'institutional literary critics'.

Sultan engages with a wide variety of critics both New and deconstructionist. Yet, after all his scholarship, his own conclusions sometimes appear unexcitingly pious. The book's longest essay, '*Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*', ends by telling us that the many relations between these two works published in 1922 constitute 'a crux of cultural history'. The whole volume ends by stating that *Ulysses* is 'an abiding treasure'. The valuable parts of this book are not its overall conclusions. Its best sections are the rigorously detailed examinations of topics such as the nature of influence, and the inability of New (or as Sultan calls it 'Formalist-Cognitive') Criticism to deal properly with allusion. Specific and painstaking treatments of Eliot's Notes on *The Waste Land*, and of that poem's compositional stages, repay the close attention which they demand Sultan is at his best (which is very good) in close, scholarly argument. Some of his wider speculations, though provocative, may be less defensible. In one of his best pieces, the essay on 'Joyce and Mann, Citizen Artists', he points out that 'Joyce and Mann shared an intense national identity and a distressed preoccupation with their nations' politics. This combination—as distinct from Pound's (or Shaw's) indignant impatience—was not characteristic of major modernist writers' (p 207) Pound's concern with America may have been misguided, but was it simply 'impatience'? Zdzislaw Najder's biography demonstrated the centrality of Polish anxieties to Conrad's writing. Did Lawrence not have a 'distressed preoccupation' with Englishness? Had Sultan written a fuller and more unified book about 'Eliot, Joyce and Co.' his erudition might have produced an essential work on the period. As it stands this book contains excellent passages on the relations between a small number of literary texts and their critics; but a good section of its likely readership will have read these pieces before This collection is to be praised for making Sultan's articles more widely available, but it adds little that is new to literary critical debate

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The Letters of T. S. Eliot. Edited by VALERIE ELIOT. **Vol. I, 1898–1922.** Pp. xxxii+638. London: Faber & Faber, 1988 £25 net

The publication of this first volume of T. S Eliot's letters is a major literary event, although one that does not radically alter our previous view of the writer. But if there are no biographical revelations (Eliot's letters to Emily Hale remain, of course, inaccessible until 2020) there are instead fascinating insights into the ways in which this essentially private man constructed his public personae.

Prior to 1913 the young Eliot can be reconstructed only from other correspondents' references to him, from the tone they adopt towards him and the topics they assume he would find congenial. By Eliot's adolescence his mother was in late middle age. Her letters suggest that maternal overprotectiveness and valetudinarianism were formative influences on a diffident child of delicate constitution. Sadly almost all of Eliot's own letters from the crucial Paris visit of 1910–11 are lost; letters to him from Alain-Fournier and Jean Verdenal evoke, however, the anti-positivist milieu in which Eliot was immersed. Verdenal's letters clarify his controversial relationship with Eliot He *vouvoyer*s Eliot; although they were obviously close friends, there is nothing to substantiate some critics' speculations about homoeroticism. It seems likely that at the time of acute psychological distress that marked the composition of *The Waste Land* Eliot sought emotional consolation in recalling the affection he had drawn from his

former intimacy with Verdenal and with Emily Hale. But this poignant yearning for what might have been—which of course anticipates the sublimations of *Four Quartets*—should be seen as the ideal wish-fulfilment of an emotionally impoverished man.

Eliot's exuberant letters to his cousin Eleanor Hinkley reveal a playful aspect of his personality that is often underestimated. His relaxed banter (manifest also in the schoolboyish immaturity of his King Bolo letters to Conrad Aiken) suggests that the aloofness or maladroitness often thought characteristic of the 'impersonal' Eliot were originally due to shyness rather than to insensitivity But his emotional expansiveness tapers off in the later 1910s. For Eliot, maturity came to mean self-repression: the formal personae of the academic philosopher, the bank executive, and the man of letters provided an impassive front for the emotional and psychological attrition of Eliot and Vivien's ill-judged marriage. The most illuminating commentary on this misalliance is Eliot's own from the 1960s, cited in Valerie Eliot's introduction:

> I think that all I wanted of Vivienne was a flirtation or a mild affair: I was too shy and unpractised to achieve either with anybody I believe that I came to persuade myself that I was in love with her simply because I wanted to burn my boats and commit myself to staying in England. And she persuaded herself (also under the influence of Pound) that she would save the poet by keeping him in England.

Against the background of domestic anxiety and the debilitation that plagued both Vivien and Eliot, the letters show Eliot consolidating his literary reputation. His ambition was combined with remarkable public resilience and skill in manipulating literary institutions If Eliot's initial cultivation of editors—aided by Bertrand Russell and Ezra Pound—was astute and persistent, his later negotiations display an astonishing grasp of his own importance, as, for example, he weighs the comparative advantages for his career of association with the *Athenaeum* or the *TLS*. As early as March 1919 he wrote to his mother of his pursuit of literary 'power' and '*influence*', remarking: 'There is a small and select public which regards me as the best living critic, as well as the best living poet, in England.' The literary world was, for Eliot, a stock market in which each author had a 'relative rating'. He self-consciously groomed his reputation and that of the *Criterion*, devoting imagination and energy to becoming 'conspicuous', and his observations of the intrigues of post-war London, involving the Squirearchy, Bloomsbury, and Middleton Murry, make absorbing reading. By the end of this volume Eliot appears a divided man. in private, emotionally insecure and haunted by the threat of psychological relapse; in public, a self-assured man of letters, who had largely severed his American roots and who carried over into his literary entrepreneurship the tough-minded decisiveness he had acquired in the City.

The edition gains immensely from the inclusion of some letters by Vivien Eliot, including an extraordinary, brave outburst to Richard Aldington, and of unexpurgated versions of some familiar letters by Pound. Mrs Eliot's annotation is informative and unobtrusive, while her privileged knowledge has enabled her to cast valuable light on innumerable private details. The second volume is anticipated eagerly.

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